

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-3 and 6-31 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 6, 11, 14, 15, 19 and 31 are independent. Claims 4 and 5 have been cancelled. Claims 1-3 and 6-31 have been amended.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 4-9 and 22-27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In that regard, claim 1 has been amended to include all of the allowable subject matter of claim 4, claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form to include the base claim 1.

On October 1, 2003, a telephone conversation was had with the Examiner in charge of the captioned application. Examiner Vy indicated that if the independent claims 11, 14, 15, 19 and 31 included the allowable subject matter of claim 4, these claims would also be considered for allowance. Based on the indication by Examiner Vy, claims 11, 14, 15, 19 and 31 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 4.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1, 6, 11, 14, 15, 19 and 31 and their respective dependent claims are now allowable.

Entry of the Amendment

It is respectfully submitted that there are no new issues which would require further consideration presented. In fact, the Examiner has already indicated allowable subject matter in at least claims 4-9 and 22-27, and he has tentatively confirmed allowability of the remaining claims pending an update of his search. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Daniel K. Dorsey (Reg. No. 32,520) at the telephone number of the undersigned to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 CFR 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant respectfully petitions for a three (3) month extension

of time for filing a response in connection with the present application. The required fee of \$950.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By  #39,491
f- Michael K. Mutter, #29,680

MKM/DKD/slb

DeD

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000